

624 lamas, the "passing" of land to people who are not members of the clan, etc.

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701 The number of men in the village liable to military service is checked, and the T'u-ssu carries out a military inspection. The troops turn out with their muskets and swords and horses. Tents, cooking kettles, pack animals and pack saddles, and sacks for carrying the flour ration are all inspected. The inspection concludes with a sham attack by the Monguor cavalry at full gallop, the soldiers firing their guns, drawing their swords, and howling and shouting.

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692 The next important procedure is ratification by the T'u-ssu of all the settlements made by the village elders in patching up quarrels during the preceding three years. The custom is that when such a settlement is made, each person involved must pay the elders 2,000 copper coins, and these accumulated sums must be offered to the T'u-ssu. If there are legal suits, as distinguished from these settlements, the T'u-ssu presides over them on the fourth day. To deal with such suits, he is accompanied throughout his journey by the officials of his court of justice and by lictors carrying chains, handcuffs, and batons, and wearing their appropriate costumes.

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681 The custom is that justice be rendered on the threshing floor of the village in the open air. The lord and his secretaries sit at tables. At the left stand two lictors dressed in red cotton and wearing high red harlequin hats, and with batons in their hands. At the right stand two lictors dressed in black. Chains, handcuffs, and batons are laid on the table, and plaintiffs and defendants kneel in front. The punishments inflicted include hanging by the wrists or thumbs, and flogging up to one hundred and even five hundred lashes. The offender is stripped and pegged out face downward, arms and legs spreadeagled. The lictors, armed with short whips or rods, strike the tender inner side of the thighs. Women are flogged on the bare back. The justice meted out is not always as brutal as it appears to be, because the retinue of the T'u-ssu is always venal. They depend on bribery for their income. Although most T'u-ssu do not approve of the corruption indulged in by many of their minor officials, they cannot always prevent it. Suits brought by the Monguors before the T'u-ssu are the delight of his retinue. It is often the crying injustices caused by the venality and peculation of the petty officials that cause Monguors to leave the clan territory and abandon their lord.

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691 The expenses of legal suits, and of the sojourn of the T'u-ssu with his retinue for that day, are paid by the litigants, but all other expenses of the official three-day visit are defrayed by the people of the village. At the end of the visit, the elders and troops of the next village come to escort the T'u-ssu on the next stage of his tour.

624 It may be noted that this triennial tour of the T'u-ssu, accompanied by his court of justice, seems to suggest that it is the T'u-ssu as an individual and not his mansion